

[Translation]

Telephone Connections

*33. SHRI SOHAN BEER :
SHRI JAI PRAKASH (Hardoi) :

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) the details of the waiting lists of various categories in respect of various Telephone Exchanges in the country, State-wise and district-wise, as on August, 1, 1996;

(b) the target fixed for various categories for providing new telephone connections in the country during each of the last three years;

(c) whether the target has been achieved;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(f) the steps taken or proposed to be taken by the Government to achieve this target?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) The details are being collected and will be placed on the table of the House.

(b) to (d). The targets fixed for telephone connections in the country during each year of last three years and the achievements made are as under. The targets were fully achieved.

(in Lakh Lines)

Year	Targets	Achievement
1993-94	11.00	12.28
1994-95	14.00	17.70
1995-96	20.00	21.83

(e) and (f). Does not arise in view of the above as the targets fixed for all the three years were fully achieved.

[English]

Long Range Aircraft

*34. SHRI S. RAMACHANDRA REDDY :
DR. M. JAGANNATH :

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be please to state :

(a) whether bid to purchase medium capacity long range aircraft by Air India to augment its fleet has been finalised;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the time by which a final decision is likely to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c). The aircraft under consideration are A340-300 manufactured by Airbus Industries B-777 by Boeing Airplane Company and MD-11 by Mc-Donnell Douglas Corporation. The proposal is at present under consideration of a Sub-committee of the Board of Air India. It is not possible to indicate any timeframe within which final decision is likely to be taken.

ESI Beneficiaries

*35. SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO : Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state :

(a) the number of industrial workers getting E.S.I. benefit at present;

(b) whether the Government propose to expand the coverage of E.S.I. schemes; and

(c) if so, the number of E.S.I. hospitals/dispensaries proposed to be opened/expanded in the country during Eighth and Ninth Five Year Plan, State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM) : (a) At present there are 73.02 lakh insured persons entitled to various benefits under the ESI Scheme.

(b) The ESI Act is extended area-wise. Once the Act has been extended to a particular area, all eligible establishments in that area get covered under the Scheme. The extension of the scheme to a particular area depends on identification of industrial centres which have already come up or centres which have potential for future growth. For this purpose, a prior joint planning by way of a systematic survey by the ESI Corporation and the State Governments is required for opening of additional hospitals/dispensaries before the Act is extended to that area. Identification of such centres is a continuous process. Coverage under the ESI Scheme can also be achieved by enhancing the wage limit. Since 1.4.92 the wage ceiling for the purpose of coverage under the scheme has been Rs.3000/- per month. Since a large number of workers, were going out of the purview of the ESI Scheme because of increase in wages as a result of multiplicity of factors, it is proposed to enhance the wage ceiling to Rs.6500/- per month to recover such employees.

(c) Construction/opening of additional hospitals/dispensaries under the ESI Scheme is need based. Additional hospitals/dispensaries are opened in accordance with the prescribed norms and their construction/opening is not linked to Five Year Plans.